

To His Honor Governor Hunt
From His Humble Serv^t.
The Author

Dr. TODD'S
ORATION,

1883

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A N
O R A T I O N,

DELIVERED AT MANCHESTER,

ON THE 17th DAY OF AUGUST, 1795 :

IN COMMEMORATION OF

Bennington Battle,

FOUGHT ON THE 16th DAY OF AUGUST, 1777.

By TIMOTHY TODD. *K*

R U T L A N D :

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Advertisement.

THE following little piece (which is in some degree local) was not written with a view for publication.—As it has been reported abroad, that it was delivered on the subject of the late Treaty with Britain—at the request of a respectable circle of Friends, a Copy is given them for publication, that the Public may judge on what ground that report was founded.

AUTHOR.





An Oration, &c.

Respected Fellow-Citizens!

TO take a retrospective view of such events as have contributed to the happiness of our dear country; to trace the deeds of such worthies who have acted a conspicuous part in *her* welfare, and to eye the hand of Providence which has conducted her to safety, may not only be an useful, but a pleasing theme. "The American Revolution is a story which has often been told," a circumstance which affects the farthest clime. The American colonies, when new in settlements, weak in numbers, and feeble in resources, saw a system formed to enslave *her* by the mother-country. Hence arose the iniquitous stamp-duty. Our countrymen petitioned and remonstrated, and heaven raised powerful friends for them in the British court. The act was consequently repealed. Many of us can well remember the joy which pervaded America on that day. It was then hoped that mutual confidence might once more be restored between the two countries.

Them

tries. But soon, alas ! it was found, that the same wicked policy was pursued in the British cabinet. Their parliament declared " they had a right to make laws, binding the Americans in all cases whatsoever." To enforce this declaration, they attempted to raise a revenue from us without our consent ; and, to evade our non-importation agreement, their merchandise was forced into our ports ; some part of which was destroyed by our enraged citizens : The remainder was sent back in the same vessels which brought it.

FLEETS and armies were sent out to enforce the acts of that parliament, which was not composed of a single American. The strength of Britain was drawn forth ; the *bands* of Germany, and the *savages* of the wilderness, were hired to destroy us. With the firmness of age, and the determination of manhood, America resisted. She made her great appeal to heaven for the justice of her cause with the spirit of enthusiasm ! Her young men became *Thine* soldiers, and ~~the~~ old men, councillors and supporters of her country's cause. To the admiration of the world, she withstood her enemies through an eight years' bloody war, which happily terminated in peace.

POSTERITY will hardly believe, and we ourselves must be astonished, on a review, to find the country, like Carthage in the third Punic war, was able to create arms, ammunition, and

and every essential for defence; that a spirit of military discipline pervaded all ranks; and even childrens' amusement was the use of arms; that armies could be raised and kept in the field through the medium of a precarious paper-currency, issued from a congress who had no power to enforce its redemption.

SUCH, however, has been the event. The circumstances are fresh in many of our minds. The inhabitants of this part of the country were, previous to the war, interestedly connected together like a common family. Their activity and zeal had been frequently called up to secure their property from the hands of oppression—the land-jobbers of New-York.

GREATER scenes now open, and greater distresses ensue. This being a frontier part of the country, disowned and unprotected, had many things to fear. The anniversary of August 16th, 1777, will bring into view circumstances which painfully wring, and soothingly please the soul. A potent army from Canada made their advances towards our lines. An imperious proclamation ushered in their march. Our northern garrisons, panic-struck, deserted their posts, evacuated their forts, and left their stores behind. Their march into the country was more like a flight than a regular retreat. [We mean not, however, to cast an odium on that army; they were under the command of officers who might possibly be
justi-

justified]. Like an inundation the foe advanced, sweeping all before them. A flight was deemed necessary for the inhabitants—A dreadful flight it was: Our roads were filled with distressed parents and little children: Behind were left their houses, devoted to the flames: Those fields which they had lately received rude from the hand of nature, and which began to blossom like the rose, their golden harvests waving to the wind, and many other precious effects.

DISTRESSES like these, one might think, would be sufficient to damp their enterprises, and drive even *hope* from their bosoms. But distress ennobles great minds; and distress fired the sons of Vermont to adventurous deeds. No sooner were the women and little ones secured, but they rallied to a point.

AN expedition was put in force against Bennington by the British. A division of their army arrives in the vicinity. The inhabitants of this State, with the assistance of their New-England brethren, attacked them in their entrenchments, and, after a bloody conflict, obtained a victory. A reinforcement, however, arrives from the British: A second engagement becomes necessary; and a victory on the part of the Americans is rendered complete.

LET us figure to ourselves the fears and
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the hopes of that day: On the north and west, an army of veteran soldiers, with their artillery, pouring upon us. In our forests, the savages of the wilderness were prowling, and thirsting for blood. The bands of Britain and Germany, with savage tribes, in the morning of that day, stand terribly arrayed against us. In the evening, see them on their flight! Behold them in our prisons, and see them wallowing in the dust!

By this circumstance the career of Burgoyne's haughty army was checked, and the drooping spirits of our countrymen were invigorated. This victory occasioned a greater. Lord the proud army from the north is invested on every side by Americans. In vain they strive to force their march back to Canada: They pile their arms, and become prisoners of war.

From this event our alliance was formed with France, and from that our independence was secured. And shall not we, who partake of the blessings this day, shall not we rejoice and be glad. Our joy will, however, be tempered with humility. Shall not those living worthies, who so successfully put their lives in their hands to procure water to cherish the fair tree of liberty, which was parching and dying, be esteemed, and those who fell be remembered; nor shall we forget their surviving children. Our hearts will likewise adore

a-superintending Providence, which has been our salvation.

THESE events laid the foundation for the honourable peace which ensued, and which we have enjoyed for more than twelve years: In which time the independence of this State has been acknowledged, and the claims of New-York have been relinquished. It is true, a gloomy cloud hung over our country for several years after the war. Powerful factions and malcontents assembled in arms in one state; another drew a heavy revenue from us, and enriched her own treasury: While anarchy threatened to take the reins of government throughout the whole, and weakness and poverty stalked at large.

UNDER these most gloomy prospects, the guardian angel of our country inspired her citizens with the idea of a consolidated government, and an union of interests—a constitution was framed, binding at this instant on more than four millions of souls.—By this government, the lives, liberties, and properties of the American citizens are secured, and evils guarded against. Under this government we now live; and who does not feel its happy effects—Arts and sciences, tillage and husbandry, manufactures and commerce, flourish in a manner before unknown. Never before did the produce of markets so fully satisfy the expectation of the farmer:—Our ships visit every

very shore. At this moment the American flag is waving in the four quarters of the globe—not hostilely displayed, but a standard of peace.

In Europe, behold embattled legions shedding the blood of thousands, and laying waste whole provinces! In America, see each one peaceably following his own calling, and growing rich by his industry. In haughty Britain, see her citizens banished to Botany-Bay, with convicts and felons, because they dare to speak their sentiments. See her manufactures languishing, her poor starving, her rich wallowing in luxury, and, by oppression, compelling her young men to become sailors and soldiers in her fleets and armies, to carry on a crusade against liberty. Imperious Britain! thy haughtiness, pride, cruelty, oppression, and injustice, will lay thee low; convulsions will shake thee, and thy day of anguish must come!—View France! See a nation struggling to be free. Can any person among us cease to wish them success—No—their cause is just, and must prevail. And, would to heaven, that ~~the~~ *her* internal police was conducted with that coolness, wisdom, justice, and moderation, which ~~in the~~ cause demands—Has that been the case? Why then does anarchy, the worst of all tyrannies, pervade her councils? Why have such torrents of blood been streaming on the scaffolds? From whence arise her Marats, her Dantons, and her Robespierres? who are idolized

idolized one day, and the next execrated—
Why is the amiable La Fayette driven from
her bosom, and immured in a dungeon? Un-
happy La Fayette! Could thine adopted Ame-
rican brethren receive thee on their shores, thy
liberty and freedom would be secure!

AMERICA, by taking a view of Britain in
her present situation, will be led to faithfully
guard her rights, as declared by her *great*
charter. She will ever oppose a *monarchy* or
aristocracy from having a place in her government
—Her freemen will see, that her elections are
open and unbiassed;—that her laws alone go-
vern, and that those who are appointed to ex-
ecute the same, are faithful to their trust.—
From France, she will learn moderation—she
will see the turpitude of the human heart
when unrestrained, and the cruelty and san-
guinary effects of anarchy—And from the bel-
ligerent powers of Europe, as well as from her
own experience, she will see the dreadful evils
and effects of war, and strive to cherish peace.
Her freemen will place confidence in those
whom they elect to office, and not judge pre-
maturely on their doings, without considering
the necessity of their measures—Her youth
will be educated in the principles of liberty,
in the nature and end of government; in the
paths of sobriety and industry, they will che-
rish their common country.

To conclude, may happiness be diffused o-
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ver this extensive empire ;—may peace, liberty, and safety be her's, to the end of time—
 "May she support her government, educate her children, and reverence her religion and her God."

"Awake Columbia! Daughter of the skies,
 "Awake to glory, and to greatness rise!
 "Arise and spread thy virgin charms abroad,
 "Thou last, thou fairest offspring of a God;
 "Extend thy view where future blessings lie,
 "And ope new prospects for th' enraptur'd eye!
 "See a new æra on this globe begun,
 "And circling years in brighter orbits run!
 "See the fair dawn of universal peace,
 "When hell-born DISCORD through the world
 shall cease *!"

• Humphreys.



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